land would land to heavy exploitation of rain forests by farmers; and

(d) if so, what initiative Government took to protect forest cover?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir. The comparison of vegetation cover based on satellite imageries for the period 1985-87 and 1987-89 shows no significant decrease in forest cover of the States comprising Western Ghats.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

(d) The steps taken to protect forest cover of Western Ghats are:

(i) Enactment and strict implementation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(ii) Assisting State Government and providing infrastructure for implementation of Central and State forest laws.

(iii) Planning Commission make special provision for the Western Ghat areas under the Scheme 'Integrated Development of Western Ghats".

Tehri Dam Project

4093. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tehri Hydro Development Corporation is restricted to do rock blasting connected with the Tehri Dam project;

(b) whether rock blasting is permitted for other projects underway in the same region, and seismic belt; and

(c) if so, the reasons for imposing such restriction particularly on the Tehri Dam Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) While the Ministry on Environment and Forests has not restricted rock blasting connected with the Tehri Dam Project, the Project Authorities had suspended blasting activities at the project pending review of the safety aspects of the Dam. In environmental clearances accorded for other projects underway in the area, no specific permission for rock blasting was required to be given by this Ministry.

Green Forests

4094. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that lush green forests were brought down to make way for setting up the Piparwar Open Cast Coal Mine Project; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) A proposal for diversion of 186.51 ha. of forest land for Piparwar Open Cast Coal Project has been received from Bihar State Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The forest area involved supports degraded forest and it contains scattered coppice growth of miscellaneous species. So far diversion of 13.11 ha. of forest land has been formally approved by the Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.